



consumer news

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I know it's food, but what is it?

How often have you wondered what is in the food you eat? According to nutritionists of Agriculture Dept. & Food & Drug Administration, food is actually a combination of minerals, vitamins, proteins, fats or other chemical substances. These chemical substances provide certain nutritional functions for the body, like giving energy, resistance to infection or replacement of body cells. The following is a look at just one aspect of the food you eat—protein. Future issues of CONSUMER NEWS will explore other nutritional components of food, including vitamins, minerals & carbohydrates.

Protein is one of the most important nutritional components of food. Its chief contribution to your body is that it is a tissue builder. In fact, the basic substance of every body cell is what protein is made of—amino acid.

Proteins in food are made up of 18 or more amino acids. After food is eaten, the protein is broken down into amino acids, which are then rearranged to form the many special & distinct proteins in the body. The body can make its own supply of at least 9 amino acids. The others, however, must come from the food you eat.

These amino acids that the body cannot supply itself determine the nutritional value of food protein. Foods that supply these essential amino acids are the following:

MILK—In measuring the nutritive value of food, milk ranks high in its protein content. One cup of sweetened condensed milk, for example, provides 27 grams of protein. This is more protein than 3 ounces of a sirloin steak, which contains 23 grams of protein.

CHEESE—This is another important source of protein, especially the cottage cheese varieties, which contain anywhere from 46 to 58 grams of protein per 8 ounce container. In addition to cottage cheese, another good source of protein is parmesan cheese, which contains 15 grams of protein per fourth a cup.

DRY BEANS & PEAS—Not generally recognized as a good & inexpensive source of protein, dry beans—such as navy beans—provide 14 grams of protein per cup. This compares favorably with a pork chop, which yields about 16 grams of protein.

PEANUTS & RELATED PRODUCTS—Another source of protein—and one that is commonly ignored—is the nut. Almonds, for example, contain 26 grams of protein per cup.

EGGS—Especially for the family on a budget, eggs are an inexpensive but important source of protein. One egg provides 6 grams of protein.

FISH—Fish, including shell fish, are good protein sources. For example, breaded frozen fish sticks, which make an inexpensive meal, contain 38 grams of protein per 8 ounce package.

POULTRY—Chicken not only provides varied menu ideas, it is also an excellent source of protein. A fried breast of chicken yields 25 grams of protein; a drumstick provides 12 grams.

MEAT—Red meat is the most commonly thought of protein source. However, red meat is also the most expensive source. While most meat products contain ample amounts of protein (for example, 3 ounces of pot roast has about 23 grams of protein), some items, like vienna sausages or processed meats, like bologna, contain only 2 & 3 grams of protein per serving.

In addition to these high-protein foods, other foods contain lesser amounts of protein. These include breads & cereals, legumes & such other vegetables as broccoli & spinach.

White paper on food prices

Cost of Living Council's Committee on Food has released a white paper on food prices that explains why meat prices have risen & forecasts what will happen to food supplies in the next few months. (A "white paper" is a special report that is prepared to explain a situation.)

According to the committee's report, food prices—especially meat prices—have risen because there is a shortage of food supplies. As a result of bad weather & undercalculations by the farmer as to how much food should be grown, food supplies in 1972 were smaller while consumer demand grew. In addition, poor grain harvests in Eastern Europe & U.S.S.R., India, China, Australia & Argentina caused unexpected demand for U.S. grain. Since mid-1972, U.S. exports of feed grains & wheat have been running about three-fourths times higher than a year earlier.

Although food prices have been rising at a rapid rate this year, the committee forecasts a "more favorable" outlook for food prices in the second half of 1973. Because of adjustments in farm programs, food prices should fall below current levels after mid-year & should be no higher at the end of the year than they were in the beginning.

The main reason for the committee's prediction that food prices will fall is that food production has increased for all major food groups except dairy & poultry products. Concerning meat, beef cattle producers are presently expanding their herds with 8% more cattle on feed than a year ago. Accordingly, beef production is expected to increase slightly in the next few months. Hog producers are raising a 7% larger pig crop than a year ago, which should result in a significant decline in pork prices in the second half of this year.

Concerning poultry, production is expected to increase 5% to 10% in the next few months, but supplies will remain smaller than in 1972 until late in the year. Production is expected to continue upward, however, because of more favorable feed prices later this year.

Beyond 1973, the committee forecasts food price stability & ample supplies for 1974: The big crops in prospect for 1973 should reassure livestock producers of ample feed supplies & give them needed confidence for planning to increase meat supplies in 1974.

Meat ceiling prices

To halt the rising cost of meat, President Nixon on March 29 ordered **Cost of Living Council** to impose an immediate ceiling on beef, veal, pork, mutton & lamb prices. The ceiling affects meat processors, wholesalers & retailers & is based on prices between Feb. 26 & March 27.

To compute the ceiling price for each meat item, the meat manufacturer, wholesaler or retailer can use the highest price at which he did at least 10% of his business in that 30-day period. That price is the ceiling price. For example, suppose that a meat market sold 5% of all chuck steak during the base period at \$1.50 a pound. It sold another 5% at \$1.40 a pound, & the rest at \$1.35 a pound. The new ceiling is not \$1.50 a pound because less than 10% of the meat was sold at that level. The ceiling is \$1.40 a pound.

To enforce the new ceiling on meat prices, the council has established a nationwide enforcement network operated by **Economic Stabilization Program** officers of the **Internal Revenue Service**. These IRS officers will be checking on meat prices in grocery stores & inspecting calculations used by the stores, wholesalers & processors in computing their meat ceilings.

Under the new controls, you can have a part in monitoring & enforcing the meat ceiling. Since April 9, the council has required the ceiling price for most meats to be posted at meat counters & other places where meat is sold in stores, such as frozen food sections. The controls also specify that you be informed that a list of ceiling prices for all meat items (including canned meat products) is available in the store. Using these signs & lists you can compare the current price of a cut of meat or a meat product with the ceiling price.

If you think a store is not in compliance with the new ceiling controls, you should contact your local IRS office. It can then conduct an investigation to be sure there are no violations.

National Commission on Productivity

National Commission on Productivity may seem like something far removed from consumer affairs, but it is not. Productivity is a measure of the efficiency & effectiveness of all the nation's enterprises. Productivity in both private business & government affects consumers in 2 ways: (1) total cost of goods & services & (2) number of hours of work needed to do a job & real earnings of workers ("real earnings" means how much a paycheck will buy). In general, the level of productivity relates to the nation's level of employment, level of incomes & level of living standards.

President Nixon created the commission in June 1970 to promote national concern with the importance of improving productivity throughout the economy. Since 1966, rate of productivity increase in the U.S. has fallen below the average of the previous 20 years & below growth rates of major foreign countries. Improvement of the nation's productivity rate, according to the commission, is vital to

- Providing more & better jobs;
- Curbing inflation & protecting real take-home pay;
- Enhancing the ability to pay for clean air & water without sacrifices in other facets of the quality of life;
- Freeing resources necessary for elimination of hunger & deprivation;
- Providing more & better community services without backbreaking taxes—that is, more productivity in government at all levels.

During 1973 the commission plans to provide workers, managers & consumers with more information about productivity & benefits of improved rates of productivity.

The following reports are free from National Commission on Productivity, Washington, DC 20506:

Productivity & the National Interest;

Meaning & Measurement of Productivity;

The Need for Productivity Growth: the Work of the National Commission on Productivity;

Improving Productivity & Productivity Measurement in Local Government;

Education & Productivity;

Productivity & the Economy.

Recommendations to reduce burns in the kitchen

You expect the top cooking surface of a range to get hot as well as the oven & broiler. But unless you have been burned or felt the heat, you probably did not know that front, sides & handles of ranges can get very hot—hot enough to cause burns. To reduce this common household danger, National Bureau of Standards has issued recommendations that could help range manufacturers make safer products.

NBS research has determined the safe surface temperatures for various materials—metal, porcelain enamel, glass & plastic—used in making sides & handles of ranges. Recommended temperatures are low enough so that any contact with the material's surface lasting one second or less will not cause skin to burn or blister. One second or less is the time required by most persons to react to pain.

Gas & electric range manufacturers are now reviewing temperature recommendations for possible inclusion in their voluntary product standards. Manufacturers cooperated with Food & Drug Administration's Bureau of Product Safety in having NBS study the problem of burns caused by ranges [CONSUMER NEWS: April 1, 1972].

Bureau of Product Safety has incorporated NBS recommendations on maximum temperatures into a regulation about the sale of certain toys—such as toy electric ovens or popcorn makers that contain heating elements, lights or motors.

For further information about the recommendations, write to Office of Technical Information & Publications, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, DC 20234.

FTC wants car claims documented

Federal Trade Commission has ordered 6 car makers to provide documentation for certain advertising claims for 1973 models. This is the 3rd round of ad documentation orders issued to car makers by FTC. Previous orders were in July 1971 & December 1972. In issuing the orders, FTC emphasized that it is not filing complaints against the companies nor is it suggesting that they are guilty of violations of any FTC rules or regulations. It is gathering information as part of its program to determine what substantiation exists to support ad claims.

FTC sent substantiation orders to Chrysler Corp, Ford Motor Co., General Motors Corp., Nissan Motor Co, Renault Inc. & Volkswagen of America Inc.

The following are typical of claims to be substantiated:

- Chrysler—Once inside a Big Dodge the noise of a large nearby crowd all but disappears.
- Ford—The LTD Brougham is quiet & well made.
- GM—The Nova is, under normal driving conditions, economical, dependable, hard working, reliable, durable, thrifty to operate & easy to maintain.
- Nissan—The Datsun is unique among economy cars because it is the only one to offer the combination of front disc brakes, overhead cam engine & independent rear suspension.
- Renault—Front wheel drive allows the Renault Sports Coupe to resist the effects of ice or snow.
- Volkswagen—The 1973 Audi has independent front suspension like the Aston Martin, a luxurious interior like the Mercedes-Benz 280 SE & the same type of reliable ignition system as a Porsche 911.

Order bans deceptive toy packaging

Federal Trade Commission has provisionally accepted a consent order prohibiting Activitoys Ltd. of Jersey City, NJ, from deceptively packaging toy, gift & hobby products that it makes. Victor Zimmerman, the company's President, also is named in the consent order.

FTC's complaint alleges that Activitoys has used deceptively oversized containers for a number of its products. FTC alleges that this method of packaging misleads consumers into believing they are getting a larger product or greater quantities of a product than is the fact.

FTC's complaint & consent order will remain on public record until April 19 to allow for public comment. Comments may be sent to Federal Trade Commission, Washington, DC 20580. FTC may withdraw its provisional acceptance at any time. A consent order is not an admission of any wrong doing & is for the purpose of settling FTC's complaint.

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